

Message Text

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SUBJECT: INCREASING GOP SENSITIVITY TO CRITICISM BY POLITICAL FIGURES

REF: LIMA 3362

1. GROWING CRITICISM BY POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS OF THE GOP'S INDECISIVE HANDLING OF THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS AND RESTRAINTS ON THE POLITICAL PROCESS HAS PROVOKED A HURT RESPONSE FROM PRESIDENT MORALES BERMUDEZ. SPEAKING AT "MILITARY ENGINEERING DAY" CEREMONIES AT THE ARMY ACADEMY AT CHORILLOS APRIL 24, HE PRAISED THE ARMED FORCES' ROLE IN PROMOTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND A SENSE OF NATIONHOOD, AND SAID THAT TODAY, WHEN THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT HAS OPENED THE POLITICAL ARENA TO THE BROADEST AND SINCEREST DEMOCRATIC DEBATE, AND ELIMINATED ANACHRONISTIC ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STRUCTURES, "HOW UNJUST ARE ALL THE ATTACKS AGAINST ...OUR ARMY AND ALL OF THE FATHERLAND'S MILITARY INSTITUTIONS." WITHOUT MENTIONING NAMES, HE CRITICIZED THOSE WHO WOULD ATTACK THE ARMED FORCES "TAKING ADVANTAGE OF DIFFICULT TIMES TO ATTACK (THE MILITARY) IN THE MOST

PROFUND ESSENCE OF ITS BEING."

HE SAID THAT IN HIS CONCEPTION IT IS THE MILITARY THAT IS SETTING THE DEMOCRATIC EXAMPLE IN PERU, ACCOMPLISHING WHAT

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THE POLITICAL PARTIES WERE UNWILLING TO DO. HE ADDED THAT THE PERUVIAN MILITARY IS CONFIDENT OF ITS ROLE AND ITS PLACE IN HISTORY, DESPITE ALL THE DIFFICULTIES "IN SPITE OF ALL THE ATTACKS AGAINST OUR INSTITUTION TODAY."

2. COMMENT: THE PRESIDENT'S WIDELY PUBLICIZED REMARKS REFLECT THE PROBLEM HE CURRENTLY FACES WITH HIS OWN INSTITUTION ON

THE ISSUE OF HIS POLITICAL PROGRAM. HE AND THE ARMED FORCES FIND THEMSELVES ALONE, FACING A DISCOURAGED AND DISILLUSIONED POPULACE. THE POLITICAL PARTIES (NONE OF WHICH, MORALES NOTED CORRECTLY, PUBLICLY SUPPORT HIS GOVERNMENT) HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE RIGHTS HE HAS GUARANTEED AS PART OF HIS POLITICAL PLAN TO VENT THEIR IRE ON THE MILITARY INSTITUTION FOR THE NATION'S PROBLEMS--APRA, ALONE, APPEARS TO BE PULLING ITS PUNCHES TO A DEGREE. INTERNALLY, MILITARY LEADERS, ALTHOUGH ANXIOUS FOR A GRACEFUL WAY OUT OF THE BURDEN OF GOVERNMENT, NONETHELESS HOLD MORALES RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DESIGN AND EXECUTION OF THE PROCESS AND IT IS NOT GOING AS SMOOTHLY AS ORIGINALLY PLANNED. ATTACKS SUCH AS HUGO BLANCO'S CALL FOR A DISBANDMENT OF THE MILITARY (REFTEL) OR MORE IMPORTANTLY, BEDOYA'S SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT'S BASIC REFORMS NO DOUBT RAISE QUESTIONS IN THE MINDS OF MILITARY LEADERS ABOUT THE WISDOM OF CONTINUING WITH THE PRESIDENT'S POLITICAL BLUEPRINT, ESPECIALLY AT A TIME WHEN THE COUNTRY FACES AN UNPRECEDENTED ECONOMIC CRISIS.

3. BUT IF THE MORALES PLAN GOES, SO IN ALL LIKELIHOOD DOES HE--AND THE PRESIDENT KNOWS IT. THE ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE TO HIM AND HIS SUPPORTERS ARE FEW: EFFORTS TO BETTER THE GOVERNMENT'S RELATIONS WITH THE MODERATE POLITICAL PARTIES ARE PROBABLY IMPRACTICAL AT A TIME WHEN THEIR RELATIONSHIP AND RELATIVE STANDING ARE UNCERTAIN. BY ACCEDING TO HIS MILITARY CRITICS

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WITH STEPS TO RESTRAIN PARTISAN ATTACKS ON THE MILITARY SUCH AS THE APRIL 25 ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE EXTREME LEFTIST PARTIES UDP AND FOCEP HAVE HAD THEIR FREE RADIO AND TV TIME WITHDRAWN DUE TO THEIR PROPAGANDA EXCESSES (SEPTTEL), HE IS LIKELY ONLY TO INCREASE PUBLIC CRITICISM OF THE REGIME.

4. MORALES, THEN, IN HIS APRIL 24 SPEECH APPEARS TO HAVE TRIED TO QUELL HIS CRITICS WITHIN THE MILITARY THROUGH AN APPEAL FOR INSTITUTIONAL UNITY IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY, AND THE ASSERTION THAT HIS POLITICAL PLAN REMAINS THE ONLY WAY FOR THE ARMED FORCES TO LEAVE THE POLITICAL SCENE WITH HONOR.
SHLAUDEMANN

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